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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000288

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AF/S - TREGER

STATE PLEASE PASS TO MCC GAULL

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MZ](#)

SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE: BIODATA ON PRESIDENT GUEBUZA

REF: A. MAPUTO 00248

[1](#)B. MAPUTO 00150

Classified By: Ambassador Helen La Lime, for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Armando Emilio Guebuza was born January 20, 1943 in Murrupula, Nampula province. His father was a member of the Ronga ethnic group (from the Maputo area) and his mother (still living) is Makua (from Nampula). At a young age, his family moved to Maputo, where Guebuza grew up. While attending secondary school at Salazar High School, he became active in the Mozambican Association of African Secondary School Students (an organization founded by Eduardo Mondlane). In 1960 he succeeded Joaquim Chissano, Mozambique's second president, as president of the nation-wide student organization. In 1963 Guebuza joined Frelimo and worked in Maputo as a clandestine operative for the movement. He was arrested by the Portuguese in 1964 for his political activities. In 1965 he fled Mozambique to join Frelimo rebels in exile in Tanzania. He was elected to the Frelimo Central Committee at its formation in 1966. During his exile in Tanzania Guebuza became a prominent guerrilla commander in the liberation army, rising to the rank of lieutenant general. He served briefly as Frelimo Secretary for Education while in exile, and in 1974 was named Minister of Internal Administration in the transition government.

[1](#)2. (U) During the early years of independence Guebuza was very close to Samora Machel, the first post-independence Mozambican president. Machel appointed him to several high-level positions within the new government, including Minister of the Interior (1975-1977 and 1983-1984) and Vice Minister of Defense (1977-1983). From 1978 to 1979 Guebuza also served as governor of Cabo Delgado and, from 1981 to 1983, he took on the role of Resident Minister in the civil war torn province of Sofala.

[1](#)3. (C) As Minister of Interior Guebuza played a role in some of the most controversial decisions made by the Frelimo government. During his first term Guebuza was responsible for the ill-famed "20/24" decree, in which many Portuguese were given just 24 hours to leave the country with a maximum of 20 kilograms of luggage. The national police under his command gained a reputation for human rights abuses during the early days of Mozambican independence. In 1983, during his second term as Minister of Interior, Guebuza oversaw the implementation of "Operation Production," an attempt to expel unemployed from urban centers to the rural northern province of Niassa ostensibly to help develop the province. Thousands of "unproductive" residents were rounded up and deported from the cities to Niassa under the program. No infrastructure was provided for those forcibly removed and some perished from hunger, exposure, or wild animal attacks. (Comment: Guebuza maintains both publicly and privately that he was personally opposed to the scheme, but was acting under orders of President Machel. End Comment.)

[1](#)4. (C) Guebuza was dismissed from his cabinet position in June 1984. Most believe his dismissal resulted from the combined effects of the public relations disaster of "Operation Production," his failure to stem the growing tide of Renamo attacks, and his order to arrest Machel ally Santo Garcia for smuggling precious stones. Machel reportedly held Guebuza under house arrest for several months. In late 1984 Guebuza's political persona was partially rehabilitated, and he was appointed to the powerless post of Minister in the Presidency without portfolio, a position he held through 1986.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Machel's death in 1986 and the ascension of President Chissano led to the recovery of Guebuza's political fortunes. Under Chissano's first government Guebuza was appointed Minister of Transport and Communications, however his key role was as the government's chief negotiator with Renamo when peace talks began in 1990. He was considered by most to be the party's de facto number two when he was elected to the post of Secretary General in 1991. Following the successful conclusion of the Rome Peace Accords in 1992, Guebuza headed the government's participation on the Supervision and Control Commission, the U.N.-chaired body which oversaw implementation of the peace agreement and guided the country towards its first multi-party elections in [1](#)1994. Guebuza was later involved in the Burundi peace process, initiated in 1996 under the leadership of former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere.

[1](#)6. (C) Sometime between the signature of the Rome Peace

Accords in 1992 and the multi-party elections in 1994, Guebuza and Chissano reportedly fell out over Guebuza's use of his cabinet position for personal enrichment. Guebuza is thought to have used his political influence to obtain shares in privatized companies and to influence regulatory decisions related to companies in which he held major shares. (Note: Guebuza's business interests range over various sectors, from fisheries to construction to tourism to publishing. He is an important shareholder in Mozambique's second largest brewery, Laurentina Ltda. and Banco Mercantil de Investimentos, one of Mozambique's largest banks. End Note.) News articles from this period equated Guebuza as the symbol of endemic government corruption. In response, Chissano omitted Guebuza from his 1994 cabinet and arranged his ouster as Frelimo secretary general in favor of Manuel Tome in 1995. Guebuza

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retained his position on the Frelimo Political Commission and won a seat as a deputy for Maputo City in the 1994 and 1999 elections. Following both elections, he was elected by his fellow deputies as leader of the Frelimo bench, a sign of his on-going influence within the party. As Frelimo's presidential candidate for the 2004 general elections, Guebuza campaigned actively, working to connect with the electorate and increase party membership. His efforts have been attributed to the successful revitalization of Frelimo, which had been facing dwindling popularity since the mid-1990's.

17. (C) Guebuza has been a leading exponent of black-Mozambican empowerment. He is widely perceived as someone who can improve policy implementation, as well as address the problems of criminality and corruption. Guebuza, who has profited handsomely from privatization and has extensive business interests to protect, appears to have little ideologically in common with Frelimo hardliners and has publicly stated he intends to continue economic reforms undertaken by the Chissano government. It is reported that following the Montepuez incidents in 2000 in which over 100 Renamo party followers died in captivity, it was Guebuza who pushed for direct talks between Chissano and Dhlakama to reduce tensions, ostensibly to prevent further erosion in investor confidence (an indication of how far along the path to free-market economics Guebuza has come).

18. (SBU) Though it is expected that government policy will remain the same under Guebuza, a new style of leadership is likely. He will adopt a more hands-on approach, with more discipline, than the approach taken by former President Chissano. He is expected to keep a close eye on all the ministries, and will focus more on internal policy and less on foreign affairs. Guebuza is intelligent, a good listener, though perhaps less of an accomplished public speaker than Chissano.? Guebuza is an alumnus of the U.S. sponsored International Visitors Program (1987).

19. (U) Guebuza is married to Maria da Luz Dai Guebuza, the sister of the current Defense Minister, Tobias Dai, and has four children. He speaks fluent English.

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